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The Negro Strides Toward Full Emancipation

For weeks on Mondays, when opinions are handed down, the Supreme Court press room had drawn a full house, including an unusually large number of Negro reporters. Last Monday, after we had all begun to give up hope of a school segregation decision that day, an unusual event occurred. Ordinarily opinions are given out in the press room after word comes down the pneumatic chute that they have been read in the courtroom above. This time the light flashed and there was a different kind of message. The press aide put on his coat and we were all shepherded into the court chamber to hear the opinion read and receive our copies there.

In that tense and crowded marble hall, the Chief Justice was already reading the opinion in *Brown et al. v. U.S.* He read in a firm, clear voice and with expression. As the Chief Justice launched into the opinion's lengthy discussion of the Fourteenth Amendment, the reporters, white and Negro, edged forward in the press boxes, alert for indications of which way the decision was going. "We come then," the Chief Justice read, "to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other 'tangible' factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities?" In the moment of suspense which followed we could hear the Chief Justice replying firmly, "We believe that it does." It was all one could do to keep from cheering, and a few of us were moved to tears.

There was one quite simple but terribly evocative sentence in the opinion. For Negroes and other sympathetic persons this packed the quintessence of the quieter misery imposed on members of a submerged race. "To separate them," the Chief Justice said of Negro children, "from others of a similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." So the 58-year old ruling of *Blessy v. Ferguson* was reversed and the court ruled "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal . . . segregation is a denial of the equal protection of the laws."

Among the audience streaming out of the Chamber when the Chief Justice had ended, the lawyers for the NAACP suddenly began to embrace each other outside the doors. They had achieved a giant stride toward the full emancipation of their people. The growing political power of the Negro had prevailed over the growing wealth of the Republican party's newest recruits, the Texas oil millionaires. In a showdown, American democracy had proven itself real. It was the votes which counted.

The unanimous ruling seemed too explicit to be whittled away in the enforcing decree. The rehearing next Fall on the form of that decree, the invitation to the Southern States to be heard, offer a period in which tempers may cool and bigots be allowed second thoughts. At the best, Jim Crow will not be ended overnight. The clue to what is likely to happen in most cities, North and South, may be found in a clause of the questions on which the Court will hear argument in the Fall.

The Court is to consider whether *"within the limits set by normal geographic school districting"* Negro children shall "forthwith be admitted to schools of their choice" or a gradual changeover be arranged. Since most Negroes in most cities already lived in more or less segregated Negro sections, these will still have largely Negro schools. It is on the borderlines that mixing will begin; ultimately the pattern of segregated schools will break down with the pattern of segregated Negro housing areas. The ultimate impact must revolutionize race relations and end the system of inferior status and inferior education which has kept the ex-slave a menial.

The decision may be enough to ensure a Republican victory in the Fall elections. If we have not blundered into war, if there is not serious unemployment, the reaction of the Negro to the segregation case may be decisive in many industrial areas. This is especially so if there is a prolonged outburst of bitterness in the South. Were the Democratic party not irremediably split on the race question, the issue of Federal aid to education and a Federal school building program might give the Democrats a chance to steal the G.O.P.'s laurels and make inroads among the building trades. But of such a strategy there is little prospect.

The Drift Toward War Continues

Some basic observations may be useful guides amid the confusing day-to-day news from Geneva, Washington and Indochina. The first was well stated by Nehru in opening the foreign policy debate in the Indian parliament last week. Nehru said the contending forces in the world were now so evenly matched that neither could impose its terms on the other. "If there is to be a settlement," he declared, "it has to be a negotiated settlement and not by imposition."

The second observation is that only one side feels it can afford peace. While the two hostile blocs are evenly matched at the moment, one of them will fall apart if there is a negotiated settlement and real peace. The world Communist

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movement and its dictatorships can hold the Soviet bloc together even if there is peace. But only the danger of war can cement the much more loosely organized American bloc. Given a settlement between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and consequences must follow which will dissolve the American-organized alliance. Without a sense of tension and fear, Congress cannot be counted on to keep up the flow of dollars abroad and military appropriations at home. Most of our allies—perhaps all of them except Turkey—do not feel immediately threatened by the Soviets. Most of these allies are concerned with older, nearer and easier rivalries: the French with the German, the Italians with the Yugoslavs, the Arabs with the Israeli, the Pakistani with the Indians.

The Germans and the British are the only ones who have a history of rivalry with the Russians, and neither are any longer strong enough to stand the gaff of prolonged tension (the cold war) or a new world war. The somewhat milder tone of the Kremlin since Stalin died and the risky character of American policy have been enough to bring London and Bonn (and of course Paris) closer to Moscow. Churchill's change of attitude is the most striking evidence of this; he obviously feels that he did not become Her Majesty's First Minister in order to liquidate the Empire as an American satellite in a new world war.

This accounts for much of the confusion and desperation evident in Washington's shifting policy on Indochina. So much more than Indochina is involved. A chain reaction threatens, has indeed begun. In Germany, Adenauer is already having trouble holding back his right wing and big business allies who want to deal directly with Moscow for trade and for the reunification of the Reich. At Bonn, as in Paris, the moderate Catholics on whom our policy depended in the construction of a "Little Europe" are slipping from power. The rift between London and Washington over Geneva is serious. But should fighting flare up, the British would be swept in behind us to protect Hong Kong and Malaya. That is why we are drifting again toward the policy of the *fait accompli*. Chiang may create the situation; new air fighting off the China coast will bear watching.

There is a third observation, perhaps the most important one of all. It is that the leadership of American society basically has no faith in the capacity of our system to stand up in peaceful competition and co-existence with the Soviet bloc. The Soviet bloc needs peace and its leaders feel sure that eventually the rest of the world will go their way without there having to do much about it. The dictatorship of the proletariat is in many ways the most effective device yet invented for compulsory saving and the exploitation of labor, i.e. the diversion of huge sums from consumption to capital accumulation and investment. Our leadership fears the swift pace of Communist industrialization; the increased military power it will bestow; and the trading benefits it can offer the in-between powers like Germany and Japan. Washington fears that given ten or twenty years of peace, and the Soviet bloc will become too strong to be defeated. A profound defeatism and pessimism, perhaps a subconscious admiration for communist dictatorship, lie behind the views of those like Dulles and Radford who think it is now or never.

Against that background one must place Indochina. As long as the war between the French and Ho promised to go on, we were not excited about it. The prospect of a settlement upset Washington because a settlement meant a French withdrawal and a victory for Ho. An extension of Communist power southward to Haiphong and Saigon portended another shift in the balance of power to the advantage of the Soviet bloc. This is more than Washington can take.

The British who have more maturity, better nerves, a longer experience and less money to spend believe rightly that the longer a settlement with Ho is delayed the worse the ultimate terms will be. They think such a settlement necessary before a new line and a new balance can be achieved and the Far Eastern situation stabilized. But for the reasons outlined above our leadership is not sure it wants the situation stabilized. We did not recognize the revolution in Russia for 15 years, and hope that by not recognizing the revolution in China maybe it will go away, or crumble, or that Chiang can do from Formosa with 250,000 men what he could not do in China with 5,000,000 men.

Thus a neurotic great power, unsure of itself, goaded by extremists at home, with its peace movement gagged, and still (despite Korea and Indochina) under the delusion of quick and easy victory by airpower, drifts toward war. It would be unwise to underrate the danger where such weak hands are on so skittery a wheel.

Of (McCarthyite) Cabbages and (Banana) Kings

The decision to continue the McCarthy hearings is a decision to carry the fight between the Eisenhower Administration and McCarthy to a final showdown in which (barring some accident like war to bring about a party reconciliation) one must destroy the other. This is not a fight McCarthy can win, and the result must be to drive him out of the party and toward the leadership of some minority fringe group. Prediction seems hazardous in assessing a combat between a man as resourceful as McCarthy and one as weak as Eisenhower but more than personalities are now involved. McCarthy took on the Army and the party too soon. . . .

The State Department and the Pentagon have begun to indulge in some pretty shabby "documentation" to condition the public mind for war. An indication on a smaller plane of how foolish they—and the White House—can become is the outburst over supposed arms shipments to Guatemala. The whole affair has stirred derision in Latin American circles here, though none of it is openly expressed. The fact seems to be that Guatemala, denied arms by the United States and allied countries, has been shopping elsewhere. As a sovereign government, it has a right to buy arms where it pleases. What we are really trying to do is to enforce an illegal arms embargo against Guatemala because it is engaged in a dispute with the United Fruit Company. The actual facts of the present affair are still in doubt. As we go to press, the owners of the Swedish vessel have denied in Stockholm that it carried arms from Stettin. In much the same hysterical vein was the attempt by Dulles to link the Honduras strike with Guatemala. The fact is that Honduras has no labor legislation whatever, and labor unrest there was long overdue.

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Around the Capitol

Wire-Tapping Can Be Beaten: It may already be dead insofar as this session is concerned. The able and exhaustive series of speeches against wire-tapping of any kind begun by Morse (Ind., Ore.) in the Senate last Tuesday is indicative. Morse's relations with McCarran are friendly and the latter, ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, is as hostile to Brownell on this issue as are the liberal Democrats. With Morse, there is a clear majority against wire-tap legislation altogether or for the McCarran bill, which provides severe penalties for unauthorized wire-tapping. The Justice Department prefers no legislation to this measure, since its operatives admittedly tap wires. Hostility to Brownell and pressure from the more militant Students for Democratic Action led the ADA this year to reverse itself and oppose wire-tapping of any kind. So did the CIO. The ACLU this year at last was ready to accept limited wire-tapping ("there is no such thing as limited wire-tapping," Morse told the Senate) under safeguards. Morse put into last Tuesday's Congressional Record the full text of a report by the Chicago Bar Association recommending the defeat of all wire-tap bills.

Knowland on Munich: Dulles' latest speech on the impossibility of co-existence "between freedom and despotism" will recall to many persons his readiness to co-exist with Axis despotism before the war. But few know that his comrade-in-arms Knowland was also an "appeaser" vis a vis Fascism. The May 15 issue of the London *Economist* (p. 533) digs up the editorial on Munich published by the Oakland, Calif., *Tribune*, the Knowland family newspaper which the Senator was helping to run at the time. The paper praised Chamberlain for his decision to meet with Hitler and a few days later said, "To those responsible for today's conference at Munich too much credit cannot be accorded . . . It may be necessary for sacrifices to be made in certain quarters but when the alternatives are countless human lives and the destruction of untold millions in property values, such sacrifices are worthwhile. This is an eventful day in world history." The real question in the minds of people like Dulles and Knowland is not "freedom or despotism" but revolution or counter-revolution, and dictatorship is acceptable, whether Hitler's or Chiang's, as long as it serves to hold back revolutionary change.

Our Last Major Peace Movement: By contrast the old America First crowd, now reorganized as *For America*, is as opposed to a war against communism as it was to a war against Fascism. In this it follows the line of its chief sponsor, Colonel McCormick of the Chicago Tribune. Since this crowd would be McCarthy's chief base in the event of a complete break with the Republican party leadership, and he is out to oppose whatever Eisenhower wants, do not exclude the possibility that McCarthy may take a demagogic line in opposition to intervention in Indo-China, as he has taken a 100 percent parity line with the farmers. McCarthy's obsession is not communism but power.

God Is Still Being Protected by the FBI: While an uproar from the Protestants forced McCarthy (and later Velde) to drop J. B. Matthews, J. Edgar Hoover is still spreading the gospel according to J. B. While Hoover does not take the line that the Protestant churches are the chief danger, he continues to picture (as in his recent speech here to the Military Chaplains Association) a Communist plot to infiltrate and take over the churches. Since such plotters would hardly preach plain and simple communism from the pulpit, all who preach the social gospel or voice a social conscience must be suspect. Conclusion: The pulpit must be policed by the FBI against dangerous doctrine and dangerous thinking as evidence of subterranean conspiracy.

And Speaking of Plots: The Jenner committee last week, opening a new series of hearings on the strategy and tactics of communism, put on a prize witness, an anti-Communist Russian professor on leave of absence from Georgetown University to organize underground struggle against the Soviets. His testimony: that Moscow was plotting to drag the U. S. into another Asian war. Does this mean that Dulles, Nixon, Knowland and Radford are Red plotters, or just dupes?

Why Excommunicate A Blessing in Disguise?

A Glimpse of the Real Italian Attitude Toward Communists

All who love Italy, and appreciate the subtlety and kindly cynicism of the Italian, will be charmed by a dispatch from Rome, "When Catholics Turn Communist," published in the May 7 issue of the Catholic weekly, *The Commonweal*. The Pope four years ago issued a decree excommunicating Communists. The dispatch deals with a report on the results published by "the venerable fortnightly of the Italian parish clergy, *La Palestra del Clero*."

The decree seems to have succeeded neither in driving Catholics out of the Communist party nor in making them anti-religious. The report shows that in the four years since the decree 1,626,957 "more baptized Italians have voted Communist or pro-Communist, which brings the total number of 'Catholic Communists' to nearly ten million" or more than one-third the total vote cast. On the other hand, "the amazing thing—and this is the difference between Italy and France—is that a great proportion of the people who regularly vote Communist have proved (particularly in the countryside) to be as attached to their religious traditions as to Communism."

"It is natural," the report in the *Commonweal* says, "that the Italian parish clergy are most disturbed by this overlapping between Communism and Catholicism. But it is asked if a more rigorous policy would be of any avail. Is it possible to treat approximately one out of every three Italians as if he were personally excommunicated?"

So Italian Communists continue to receive the sacraments and Italian anti-Communists, being Italians, are sharp enough to see the advantage of having Communists around. If it were not for the Communist danger the correspondent reports, "Italy would not have received half the American aid which in fact has been given." A right-wing cartoonist in Rome "recently represented Italy as a machine, fed with American dollars, producing Communists who in turn stimulate Uncle Sam to pour more dollars into the machine."

That is not the end of the covert blessings the Italian sees in the Red Menace. Thanks to it, "one out of every three soldiers is politically unreliable." This and "the number of Communists in the Italian factories and ministries, means that in case of war the West would use the Italian army and Italian factories as little as possible . . . Consequently, unless Italy was to become a theatre of war, which is unlikely, she would be safer from destruction than she would be if the Communists were not there."

So, according to the *Commonweal's* Rome correspondent, the Italians feel that the presence of a large Communist minority serves to protect Italy from a future war. "The non-Communist Italians . . . rightly refuse to call it consciously Machiavellian policy, for it is not. They simply consider it to be luck, the luck which Italy has so often had—'la stellone d'Italia,' Italy's big lucky star." So Il Pape winks at the padre and the padre winks at his Communist parishioner in this typically Italian tableau.

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JENNINGS PERRY

Ike Passes Political War Buck to the Holy Joes

Despite the occasional envy of their home-keeping brethren of the cloth, the life of our military chaplains is not all interesting travel and soft billets. It has not been made easier by the President's recent injunction to them to do a better job of seeing to it that every American soldier knows what he is fighting for. Indeed it is not beyond the mercy of understanding to suppose that even after their commander-in-chief's directive, and time for prayerful meditation upon it, the good chaplains may be at a loss as to just how to proceed.

The task laid out for them in Mr. Eisenhower's address to the 22nd annual convention of their association is specifically that of instilling in the soldiers the religious values vital to "defend freedom against totalitarianism." Such a ministry to soldiers naturally would have for aim the improvement of the fighting quality of the troops. It is a job delegated in some other modern armies to political commissars. What must give pause to our chaplains is, first, the necessity of selecting only those religious tenets which strengthen a man's spirit and arm for battle, since many religious teachings are downright pacifistic, and, next, an inevitable doubt as to the practical merit of any religious motive as a tactical support in armed conflict.

In other times, it is true, the levies could be sent forth under the Cross or the Crescent with the cry "In this sign conquer!" and great deeds of valor were done both by the true believers and the dogs of infidels, and great loot was taken. But in warfare in our day the tough admonitions of the sergeant rather than the counsels of the clergy seem to steel the recruit. And at Dien Bien Phu, now gazetted for glory, the heroic tenacity of a mixed garrison composed largely of Foreign Legion adventurers of all faiths and no faiths admittedly was due to two quite secular factors—discipline and desperation. Gen. de Castries' last report was to his commanding superior, his last salute "Vive la France." The nameless soldiers who fought to the end with "matchless courage" could have done no more for lofty ideals than they did in the wan hope of keeping their heads alive upon their shoulders.

Considering the forces whose military effectiveness was exemplified at Dien Bien Phu, our chaplains well may be disturbed by the reflection that the other side, with or without benefit of clergy (and without a plane to cover its heads) fought bravely too: and that in all wars one side as much as the other will be convinced that its cause is the just.

These things cancel. The chaplains are of course part of the armies whose uniform they wear, and as adequately imbued with patriotic bias as their fellow officers. They do not have to be told to preach crusades any more than they have to be told that if they should perchance so yield to the promptings of conscience as to dwell on those religious values vital to defend mankind against all thought of war, they would not long continue in uniform and rank.

They have a proper function in the camps and behind the battle lines—consolation, whenever it will be received. Whenever they become propagandists, they are apt to place the dieties they serve in very embarrassing situations. "Gott mit uns" is a dangerous doctrine. It has not been long since, in our own land, partisan clergy devoutly blessed one section and damned another . . . Which no doubt is why my veteran grandfather, in his age, preferred Kipling to Beecher and nodded knowing assent to Fuzzy-Wuzzy the "pore benighted heathen, but a first class fighting man."

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